

Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP)

From its inception in 1775, the Marine Corps has distinguished itself as a Martial Culture. The legacy of the Corps is built upon the close combat of ships of sail, the storming of the bois de Bel-leau, the holding of “Bloody Ridge” on Guadalcanal and in recent times, the Iraq and Afghanistan Campaigns. In order to better prepare Marines for the conflicts to come, the 32nd Commandant of the Marine Corps, General James L. Jones, envisioned a program that would provide Marines the tools to conduct Military Operations in Urban Terrain (MOUT) and to realize the potential of every Marine as a warrior. The Marine Corps Martial Arts Program (MCMAP), managed by the Martial Arts Center of Excellence (MACE), is the product of that vision.

The Martial Arts Program is based on five, colored-belt levels with six different degrees of black. Each belt level is broken down into three disciplines, each of which a Marine must become proficient in before attaining the next belt level. The mental, character, and physical disciplines of the warrior are the foundation of the Martial Arts Program. The mental discipline consists of warrior studies, martial culture studies, combative behavior studies, and other professional military education. The character discipline is built around the Marine Corps’ core values: Honor, Courage, and Commitment. The character discipline stresses the role of the warrior on and off the battlefield 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The physical discipline consists of the 184 techniques that are taught through the 5 belt levels.

Through the successful synergy of these disciplines at each belt level, a Marine will enhance their own warrior spirit.

The following are the belt levels from beginner to expert, with a description of some of the lessons, and prerequisites for each belt:

Tan Belt - Basic techniques and an introduction to the martial culture. There are no prerequisites for this belt. It is designed for the entry-level, basically trained Marine.

Gray Belt - Expansion on basic techniques, introduction to ground fighting and force continuum. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete tan belt sustainment and integration training, and complete MCI 03.3 Fundamentals of Marine Corps Leadership. There are 32 training hours and 7 sustainment hours for this belt.

Green Belt - Expansion on Gray Belt techniques, ground fighting techniques, and an introduction to free sparring. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete gray belt sustainment and integration training, Lance Corporal or above, and appropriate level PME complete. There are 30 training hours and 14 sustainment hours for this belt.

Green Belt Instructor - This is the first belt level that is designated as Martial Art Instructor in accordance with the MCMAP program of instruc-



tion. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete gray belt sustainment and integration training, Corporal or above, appropriate level PME complete, Physical Fitness Test score of 225 or higher, and a second-class swim qualification.

Brown Belt - Expansion on Green Belt techniques, ground fighting, free sparring, and basic firearm retention and disarmament techniques. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the com-

manding officer, complete green belt sustainment and integration training, Corporal or above (the director of the MACE may waive the grade requirement for exceptionally qualified LCpls, who possess superior leadership skills and maturity), and appropriate level PME complete. There are 30.5 training hours and 21 sustainment hours for this belt.

Black Belt - 1st Degree - Expert techniques, counters to pistol presentations, advanced anatomy and physiology. The prerequisites for this belt are a recommendation from the commanding officer, complete brown belt sustainment and integration training, Sergeant or above (the director of the MACE may waive the grade requirement for exceptionally qualified corporals, who possess superior leadership skills and maturity), appropriate level PME complete. All career Marines should earn

their black belt within eight years of their initial qualification as a tan belt. There are 34.5 training hours and 28 sustainment hours for this belt.

Black Belt - 2nd to 6th Degree - Marines designated as Instructors or Instructor Trainers, Military Occupational Specialty 8551 and 8552, respectively, are authorized to advance to these belt levels. The emphasis in these degrees is placed on community service, unit training, professional studies on martial cultures, and advanced skills within the martial arts program.

The MCMAP techniques, complemented with subsequent training and sustainment to more advanced levels, provide every Marine with the ability and confidence to fight in hand-to-hand combat using any weapon available. The techniques also provide every Marine the self-discipline to understand the responsible use of force, both on and off the battlefield. The effective use of these two disciplines ensures that the Marine Corps will win our nation's wars and secure the peace in the same battle. With the knowledge of the spectrum of violence (force continuum) taught during Gray Belt training, and the combination of non-lethal techniques taught in Tan Belt, Marines are equipped with the ability to effectively engage in the growing trend of Military Operation other than War (MOOTW).

The MACE is located at the recently dedicated Raider Hall in Quantico, VA.

From Raider Hall, the MACE conducts four Martial Arts Instructor Trainer (MAIT) courses and six to eight Martial Art Instructor (MAI) courses per year. Upon completion of the physically demanding, seven-week MAIT course, a Marine earns status as a First Degree Black Belt and a Martial Arts Instructor Trainer. The minimum requirements to attend the course are: must be a Green Belt Martial Arts Instructor, rank of Sergeant or above, 225 minimum score on the Physical Fitness Test, and a 2nd Class Swim Qualification.

The MACE will hold a Course Curriculum Review Board (CCRB) in December 2006 where a review of all 184 techniques will be conducted and any change recommendations will be taken into consideration. The board will consist of members from each satellite school (SOI's East/West, MCRD's PI and San Diego, Hawaii, and Far East Okinawa) and any special invitations made by the MACE Director. The purpose of the CCRB is to improve the program in its current application and discuss future training priorities in accordance with the Marine Corps' mission.

The end state of the Marine Corps Martial Arts Program is to develop a professional Marine who is an arms carrying professional who cannot only fight under a multitude of circumstances, but understands the moral dimensions of conflict, makes ethical decisions in any situation, and upholds the image and high moral fiber that the Marine Corps has prided itself on for over 230 years.